

**Amendments to the Specification**

At page 2, line 5, amend the paragraph as follows:

Very little, however, is known about the function of Hb, although it has been proposed that nonsymbiotic hemoglobins may act either as oxygen carriers to facilitate oxygen diffusion, or oxygen sensors to regulate expression of anaerobic proteins during periods of low oxygen supply. The proteins from barley (Duff et al, 1997, *J. Biol Chem* **272**: 16746-16752, ~~incorporated herein by reference~~) and rice (Arrendondo-Peter et al, 1997, *Plant Physiol* **115**:1259-1266) and AHB1 from *Arabidopsis* (Trevaskis et al, 1997, *Proc Natl Acad Sci* **94**:12230-12234) have been shown to have high oxygen avidity, with dissociation constants for oxyhemoglobin of 2.86 nM, 0.55 nM and 1.6 nM respectively, resulting in conditions whereby the free protein will remain oxygenated at oxygen concentrations far below those at which anaerobic processes are activated. Thus, while roles for Hb in the facilitated diffusion and sensing of oxygen have been proposed (Appleby, 1992), it is unlikely that these hemoglobins would function as either facilitators of oxygen diffusion or sensors of oxygen, unless the oxygen avidity was modified by interaction with another component within the cell. Thus, while Hb or Hb related proteins are found in all divisions of living organisms, their function has not been well defined.